



& Workers' Liberty

Solidarity

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Defend Freedom of Movement!

STOP BREXIT

By Martin Thomas

Opinion polling on 10-11 October showed 64% saying that the Tory government is doing "badly" in negotiating Brexit, and only 21% saying it is doing "well".

47% said that, with hindsight, they thought the vote for Brexit in June 2016 was wrong, 40% that it was right.

Only a small minority say that Brexit will make Britain better off economically — only 23% overall, and only 12% of Labour voters. 44% think Brexit will make Britain worse off.

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Inside:

Iraqi troops out of Kirkuk!



The Iraqi army has entered Kirkuk as Kurds flee.

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The Russian Revolution 100 years on



The Russian Revolution happened on 25-26 October 1917 (old calendar).

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Royal Mail wins injunction against strike



What does the High Court injunction against the postal strike mean?

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Join Labour!
Open up the democracy review!

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Weinstein case exposes reality of work-related sexual assaults

By Caroline Jeffries

Dozens of women have come forward accusing the famous Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein, of sexual harassment, assault and rape, with some cases dating back to the 1980s.

Many women detail how he would corner them asking for sexual favours with the clear implication that he could make or break their careers.

Mainstream media, celebrities, and even politicians are condem-

ing the actions of Weinstein and sending messages of solidarity to the survivors of Weinstein's assaults. And now the hashtag #Metoo is trending, where women from all over the world share their stories of sexual harassment and assault. While bringing survivors together, these events have demonstrated the prevalence and acceptance of gender-based abuse and bullying globally.

But none of this is surprising, particularly that most of the assaults in the Weinstein case oc-

curred in a work setting. A study in 2016 found that 52% of women in the UK had experienced sexual harassment at work, with one in eight women reporting unwanted touching of their breast, buttocks or genitals. Despite these high numbers, four in five women said they did not report the incidents, mainly citing the fear that they wouldn't be taken seriously.

We should remember that one reason the McDonald's workers went on strike last September was over workplace sexual harassment,

particularly from the bosses. This is not to compare the work of McDonald's workers to Hollywood actors, but rather to highlight that sexual harassment is a significant issue regardless of industry or work being done.

No doubt the precarious nature of jobs like those at McDonald's make reporting and finding support even harder. If you are on a zero hours contract, standing up to your boss could mean you aren't offered any more hours.

Many trade unions have good

policies on sexual harassment but rarely organise around the issue. The labour movement needs to use this horrific case as a moment to step forward. Just as we organise around pay and conditions we need to organise around respect and safety at work for the most oppressed groups in our society.

We can't wait for our bosses and well meaning liberals to change the conditions for women; it is up to us in the labour movement to define our grievances and organise to fight them.

Royal Mail injunction sets precedent?

By Gemma Short

On Thursday 12 October the High Court granted an injunction to Royal Mail, stopping a strike organised by the Communication Workers Union (CWU) due to start on Thursday 19 October.

In granting the injunction, Mr Justice Supperstone said "I consider the strike call to be unlawful and the defendant is obliged to withdraw its strike call until the external mediation process has been exhausted."

In October 2013, at the time of Royal Mail privatisation, the CWU signed the "Agenda for Growth" agreement with the company. Royal Mail intended this agreement to significantly decrease the number of strikes in Royal Mail, particularly the unofficial ones which postal workers have a long history of organising.

The agreement commits the union to an external mediation process in the event of a national disagreement, or in the event that a local, unofficial, strike is not resolved (the emphasis being on the CWU controlling its members).

The "Agenda for Change" deal gave workers a 9.1% pay increase over three years, and committed Royal Mail to protect workers' terms and conditions for at least five years. However this was seriously undermined by the attempt to curtail strikes, and by a loophole which allowed Royal Mail to renege on those commitments if bosses deem any of them "reasonably likely to have a materially adverse effect on the employer's business or prospects".

Part of the current dispute is over the imminent likelihood of Royal Mail using that loophole to change workers' terms and conditions.

The deal also states "The employer shall be entitled to notify the CWU at any time that any of the Protections will no longer continue, if [...] there is national-scale industrial action (in the form of a strike or action short of a strike) which has been authorised at national level by the CWU [which] will have, or is reasonably likely to have, a [...] disruptive effect."

The High Court ruled that the CWU had to abide by the agreement it signed. This raises questions for the labour movement over how deals signed by unions could be enforced by a court.

The external mediation process in the "Agenda for Growth" agreement is set at a five to seven week timeframe. It involves the appointment of a mutually-agreed external mediator, submissions from both parties, the mediator producing non-binding recommendations, talks between both parties, and either the drawing up of an agreement or the notification of intentions (i.e. declaring a dispute) if the parties disagree.

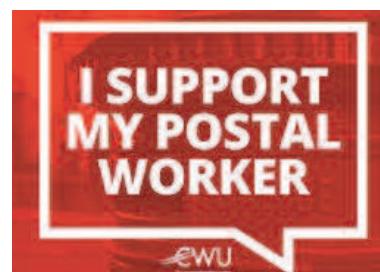
As Royal Mail says it is now invoking this process, we can expect a minimum of seven weeks before any strikes. Strikes may happen from the start of December, in time for the Christmas period.

It is unlikely that either the CWU will call strikes despite the ruling, or that there will be unofficial strikes. Despite a tradition of unofficial strikes on local issues, such as a worker being suspended or sacked, this has never been extended to national disputes.

Royal Mail clearly intends to disrupt the momentum of the dispute after the large ballot result for strikes. However there is no reason why the CWU cannot maintain momentum through the mediation process.

The CWU should publish full reports of the negotiations, including what the employer says, in the interests of democracy and keeping members involved.

Workplace meetings which delivered the large ballot result should continue for members to discuss the outcomes of the mediation, and make plans for the strikes.



Universal Credit on the rocks?

By Matthew Thompson

The government is coming under pressure to halt the roll-out of Universal Credit, the new benefit which is replacing six existing ones: Jobseekers' Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Income Support.

Created by the Conservative-Lib Dem coalition government as part of the Welfare Reform Act in 2012, Universal Credit was launched in 2013 as a pilot in a single area, the former textile town of Ashton-under-Lyne just to the east of Manchester, and has since been extended across the country, with full implementation for new claimants due to be complete by the end of 2018 (existing claimants receiving benefits being replaced by it are due to be transferred onto Universal Credit between the end of this year and 2021).

As well as delays caused by IT issues, Universal Credit has led to problems caused by the structure of the benefit itself.

The brainchild of former Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, Universal Credit is intended to mimic the payment of wages, and so is paid four-weekly, rather than weekly or fortnightly as most benefits were before, with an initial six-week waiting period and, in the case of housing costs, directly to claimants rather than to landlords as has been standard until now.

This has led to a spike in referrals to food banks in areas where it has been introduced and a build-up of rent arrears, and ultimately evictions, for tenants in both social housing and privately rented accommodation.

Self-employed people with small earnings, who until now have received Working Tax Credit, are also being adversely affected by the extension of Universal Credit to them, with the introduction of a so-called minimum income floor, which requires them to earn the equivalent of the National Minimum Wage every month, and the applying to them of the cap on savings which is already part of other means-tested



Delays in Universal Credit has caused a spike in food bank referrals.

benefits, currently £16,000, after which benefits are annulled.

The implementation of Universal Credit, if not all the principles underlying it, has been criticised by a wide spectrum of voluntary organisation and charities, groups representing claimants, PCS, the trade union of the civil servants responsible for implementing it in jobcentres, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary Debbie Abrahams, and even some Tory back-benchers.

The government has already made a series of recent u-turns on controversial policies such as the so-called "dementia tax". Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionists have threatened to abstain in a House of Commons vote on the issue.

A pause in the roll-out of this continuing attack on some of the poorest people in Britain is now a real possibility.

Egypt tortures LGBT people

The Egyptian government has conducted an intense campaign of arrests, torture and intimidation against LGBT people over the past month.

Dozens of LGBT people have been arrested, and many subjected to torture in custody in the form of so-called "anal examinations", since 22 September, when the wave of repression was launched following a gig by left-wing Lebanese band Mashrou' Leila in a suburb of Cairo. The band's lead singer, Hamed Sinno, is openly gay and a vocal advocate of LGBT freedoms.

Conservative and pro-government media outlets orchestrated a

campaign of moral panic and homophobic outrage after images circulated of rainbow flags being waved at the gig. Immediately 57 people were arrested, but the campaign has not let up.

Homosexuality is technically legal in Egypt, although "public homosexual acts" are considered criminal; and LGBT people are routinely arrested under vaguer charges like "debauchery" which carry long prison sentences.

Perhaps 300 LGBT people have been arrested since military-backed strongman Field Marshal el-Sisi took power in 2014.

Iraqi troops out of Kirkuk!

By Simon Nelson

Iraqi government forces and Shia militias have occupied Kirkuk for the first time since 2014, the year Daesh made their away across Iraq.

Although Kirkuk is not part of Iraqi Kurdistan it has been under the control of Kurdish forces. In the September referendum it voted by a sizeable majority in favour of independence. Up to half a million Kurds are now fleeing Kirkuk for northern Iraq.

Following the referendum Kurdish peshmerga and civilians gathered arms and prepared themselves for a threatened takeover. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the largest Kurdish party and the party of the President of the Kurdistan



Regional Government, Masoud Barzani, has accused the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) of abandoning Kirkuk to the government.

The PUK has met Qassem Suleimani, the head of Iran's Quds Force, whom the *New Yorker* named as "Iran's chief spymaster." The meeting seems to have led to the

PUK's retreat and made the re-taking of Kirkuk easier although some PUK units refused orders to stand down and return to KRG territory.

The Iraqi President Abadi said, "We call upon all citizens to co-operate with our heroic armed forces, which are committed to our strict directives to protect civilians in the first place, and to impose security and order, and to protect state installations and institutions." One of their first tasks has been to remove Kurdish flags from buildings and institutions.

The USA has said it supports "joint administration" in Kirkuk but has called for negotiations, as has the UN. Neither recognise the result of the referendum.

The Kurdish people have the right to determine their own future, the Iraqi government should immediately withdraw from Kirkuk and negotiate on the basis of recognition of the referendum result.

Turkish forces in Syria against the Kurds

Turkish forces are now undertaking an operation in the Syrian province of Idlib.

In agreement with Iran and Russia they are there to enforce a so-called "de-escalation zone", to seek an end to the fighting.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria, are the largest anti-Assad force operating in Idlib. Turkey's main concern, however, is the neighbouring Kurdish enclave of

Afrin. Afrin is under the control of the Kurdish YPG, the largest constituent part of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) who receive US and coalition support.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has reported HTS escorting Turkish troops to an area adjoining Afrin.

Turkish President Erdogan has said that he will not allow the YPG to form a "terror corridor" to the Mediterranean.



Solidarity with Mogadishu victims

By Michael Elms

Over 300 people were killed and many more injured in a massive truck bomb attack in the Somali capital of Mogadishu on Saturday 14 October.

The truck bomb was detonated outside the Foreign Ministry building on a busy road, and ignited a nearby oil tanker.

The Federal Government of Somalia has said that the attack was almost certainly carried out by Al-Shabaab, a Salafist group which has been waging a war to overthrow the Federal Government since 2006, when US and Ethiopian troops drove the Union of Islamic Courts from Mogadishu.

Al-Shabaab was the youth wing of the UIC, and became hegemoned by Salafi politics at vari-

ance with Somalia's mainstream Sufi religious tradition.

Al-Shabaab has been driven into pockets in the countryside and expelled from most major cities, but rural poverty, a weak central state, and the current severe drought that Somalia is suffering have given it opportunities to build a power base.

The attack comes two weeks after Al-Shabaab captured a military base close to Mogadishu, in Barire.

The Somali community in the UK is organising events and initiatives to alleviate the suffering of victims and their families. The labour movement and left should give their support and solidarity.

A Bristol Support for Mogadishu meeting has been organised for 23 October at 6pm at Bristol City Hall.



Virgin: stop deporting LGBT migrants!

UCL Workers' Liberty and Out and Proud African LGBTI demonstrated against the visit of Virgin Atlantic's CEO Craig Keeler to UCL on Monday 16 October.

They were protesting at Virgin Atlantic's role in the deportation of asylum seekers, and of LGBT asylum seekers in particular. The protestors highlighted the cases of Hadja Mwenshee, from Tanzania, and Lazio Nabanda, from Uganda.

A spokesperson for Lesbians &

Gays Support the Migrants said: "Virgin Atlantic exploit vulnerable people for profit. Public pressure and direct action can make a real difference — queer solidarity smashes borders".

Mable Nalule, from Out & Proud African LGBTI said: "The Home Office must stop the deportations of LGBT asylum seekers and refugees back to their home countries where they will be persecuted and killed. Please free Lazio Nabanda from the detention centre so she can live her free life."

Hunt's A&E threat

By a junior doctor

A senior figure at NHS England has suggested that Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health is considering a "talk before you walk policy" for all presentations to the Emergency Department in the NHS in England.

Patients would need to either see their GP or call 111 before attending A&E.

The comments have provoked a backlash, and both the Department of Health and NHS England have denied the plans to pilot such an approach. NHS England is seemingly divided and in disarray about how to deal with the sustained and severe pressure the NHS is currently facing.

Contingency plans for another difficult winter have been criticised with the promised help of an extra £100 million funding, described as a "sticking plaster" by the RCN.

Alongside all this, has come the announcement of a 10,000% rise in the number of patients waiting 12 hours in Emergency Departments since 2012.

In 2012 only 15 patients suffered a "trolley wait" of over 12 hours; by last winter the figure had risen to 1597 patients a year.

Drives to ration healthcare and prevent patients accessing the services they need have become in-

creasingly common in the NHS. Referral management systems have become commonplace in the NHS. Referrals from General Practitioners to Consultants can be screened, and can be rejected by a panel of administrators. These systems have previously been criticised by the BMA as being unnecessary and "performance seems to be related to blocking referrals rather than patient care."

Attempts to delay, divert or dissuade patients from attending move the pressure around the system, storing up problems for later and placing greater burdens on other areas that will also be stretched beyond capacity.

Extra barriers make the NHS harder to navigate, particularly for the frail, infirm and unwell.

Alongside these barriers the wait for many services are increasingly. Labour MPs have recently highlighted the current wait for autism diagnostic assessments are often over two years, yet national standards say these assessments should take place within three months.

The Labour Party needs to ensure that the disastrous failings of this government are highlighted and that the Party has a plan in place to ensure it is putting forward the practical solutions that health workers desperately need.

Joanne Landy

Joanne Landy, one of the last surviving representatives of a thin thread of living continuity between the Third Camp Trotskyists of the 1940s and politics today, died on 14 October in New York, aged 75.

She was one of the early members of the Independent Socialist Club which was founded by Hal Draper in Berkeley, California, in 1964, to regroup the revolutionary socialist wing of the remnants within the Socialist Party USA of the old "Shachtmanite" Workers' Party and Independent Socialist League.

The ISC expanded rapidly into a US-wide organisation, and in 1969 renamed itself "International Socialists". Despite Draper dropping out in 1971, the IS did significant educational and trade-union work until it was disrupted by about seven splits in 1975-7, prompted by moves by the British IS (forerunner of the SWP) to gain control of the US organisation.

In later years Joanne organised through the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, a committee launched in 1982 to take "Third Camp" initiatives in international politics.

BBC bashing the Bolsheviks

LETTERS

The BBC should hang its head in shame.

Their documentary (aired 9 October) about the Russian Revolution was appalling. Anyone wanting to know what happened and why in 1917 will need to go elsewhere, consulting the Oracle at Delphi would be more rewarding.

No kind of analysis or narrative of the events of 1917 was offered, nor any attempt to tackle important questions and certainly no attempt to offer a range of views for debate. Instead the viewer was bombarded with a venomous and, at times, monumen-tally stupid, lambasting of the Bolsheviks, particularly Lenin and Trotsky. The makers of the documentary couldn't even be bothered to find genuine archive footage (which is readily available) instead we were mainly shown clips from Sergei Eisenstein's film of the Revolution, 'October' (made in 1927) ac-

companied by the music of Dimitri Shostakovich (How original! Who would have thought of that?).

Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin were played by three actors who bore about as much resemblance to them as Norman Wisdom, Frankie Howard and Benny Hill. The only other person played by an actor was Kerensky who made couple of short appearances talking to camera (oh very avant-garde!). As for the rest of the "dramatis personae" only General Kornilov and the Tsar are mentioned by name.

Alas, if this farago of ham-fisted production values and clichéd dialogue wasn't bad enough, the poor viewer had to, additionally, suffer the likes of Martin Amis, Victor Sebestyen, Helen Rappaport, Orlando Figes Simon Sebag-Montefiore and other self-opinionated right-wing windbags whose only contribution was to tell us endless anecdotes about how nasty/scheming/two-faced Lenin was and how ambitious/vain/arrogant Trotsky was. I actually felt sorry for the actors – to be fair to them it would have taken the

skills of Laurence Olivier to rescue anything from this stilted, cheapskate mash-up. Go to your local amateur dramatics society and watch their Christmas production of *Pirates of Penzance* and you'll get more entertainment and intellectual stimulation.

Tariq Ali and China Mieville tried to offer a counter perspective but, in effect, they only had "walk on" parts presumably to offer at least a fig-leaf of "balance". All the usual tripe was turned out, for example: the revolution was a coup d'état. No arguments were put for that conclusion, other than that Amis, Montefiore and the rest said so. We were constantly told, gleefully, that the Bolsheviks had no support and crowds only turned up at the Finland Station to greet Lenin because they had been offered free beer! This at least was a new fairy tale to add to all the others. No one seemed prepared to tackle an obvious question: if the Bolsheviks were "Johnny-nomads" how come they mobilised many thousands for the revolution, closing down Petrograd when the crucial time came and

how come they defended the city, successfully, against Kornilov?

Funnily enough, despite the fact that the Bolsheviks were friendless and entirely without support or allies, why did the programme makers talk only about them? In the whole programme there was no mention of the Social Revolutionaries (Left or Right), the Mensheviks, Anarchists and Kadets. Nor did the Kronstadt sailors feature despite their leading role in the events of October and heaven forbid that women should be mentioned despite their key role, particularly in the February Revolution.

Finally, I would mention three other major flaws connected with this documentary: first, that the production team ever bothered to make it; second, that the BBC decided to broadcast it and third, that I wasted an hour of time watching this rubbish when I could have been in the pub.

Len Glover

Learning and working

I agree with Paul Vernadsky's reply (*Solidarity* 450) to Colin Waugh (449).

Colin quotes Marx from 1845: "The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice". He interprets this as saying "that most insights into how [the world] functions must be arrived at by workers" and "through work, especially work with a large physical component". Non-manual-workers can produce new understanding only by dialogue with those manual workers.

Yet Marx's picture was of "the detail-worker of to-day, grappled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man".

Workers, Marx wrote, would under capitalism gain chances to enlarge their understanding not from their routine physical work processes, but from the pressure on capitalists to develop "fitness of the labourer for varied work, consequently the greatest possible development of [their] varied aptitudes" — often by formal training and education. One of the great advantages of the modern wage-workers over previous labouring classes is our variation of jobs, and our capacity to win more free time and wider culture outside work.

Did Marx paint too unfavourable a picture of manual labour in the capitalist workplace? Some craft workers develop inventions.

But what about the typical machine-minding worker? And the workers who transport products, or repair and maintain them — dockers, electricians, cleaners? Or office workers? Can they learn only by being instructed by manual craft-workers?

Marx's 1845 statement means not that only the individual physically making widgets or waffles can develop new understanding of the world, but that the collective human process of developing new understanding is linked with the collective human process of transforming the physical and social world. Workers' greater social understanding is gained mainly through collective social struggle (and associated discussions) rather than from their labour for the capitalist.

To take a field I know a little about: the de-

velopment of the mathematics of complex analysis between the mid-18th and the mid-19th century was linked with the development of Newtonian physical sciences and in turn of industrial technology.

But none of the key contributors were manual workers. Nor did they fit into the other category of thinkers envisaged by Colin: "intellectuals produced by the ruling class in the interests of its continued dominance".

All were of modest social origin (Gauss son of a bricklayer, Euler and Riemann of poor priests, Cauchy and Weierstrass of government officials, Dedekind of a university official...) None had much interest in technology. The links between their work and technology were indirect and complicated.

The great Karl Weierstrass when young was a school teacher, covering many subjects, including gymnastics, as well as maths. Far from the physical labour of gym lessons stimulating Weierstrass's research, he saw that time as one of "unending dreariness and boredom" when he "had neither a colleague for mathematical discussions nor access to a mathematical library".

Social understanding, too, develops through a complicated collective process, not by the individual gaining revelation from her or his physical labour. What workers — and all of us — need most to raise our understanding is what Weierstrass needed: "colleagues for discussion" and "access to a library".

Those come "from outside" the immediate labour process, and through the work of a revolutionary socialist party with a strong tradition.

Karl Weierstrass



No proper Brexit debate

Alex Nunns' report of Labour Party Conference for *Red Pepper* is one of the better pieces written about the debate and atmosphere in Brighton this year.

Nonetheless it is another example of attempts to portray the lack of discussion of Brexit as either tactically clever or a minority interest only shared by the Labour right. Neither claim bears up to scrutiny.

His contention that the AWL and others are just moaning about Momentum organising delegates is misleading in the extreme. While true that Brexit was not prioritised because Momentum was able to convince people to vote for different topics, there was no debate as to why Brexit should not be prioritised, or any other areas for that matter.

Well over 250 people were at the eve of conference CLPD rally, where delegates were told what to prioritise. There was no debate as to who had made the decision but it would be foolish to believe that the Labour leadership did not also intervene with the Momentum and CLPD leadership to avoid discussion of a potentially divisive issue.

Nunns refers to it as a "pragmatic desire to avoid a split." What would a split have meant? A chance to discuss the most important implication of a Tory Brexit, the restric-

tion on freedom of movement! The spectre of Progress and Labour First arguing for Labour to back the single market is given as a reason to distrust agitation that the Labour Party should discuss its response to Brexit at its own conference!

Nunns concedes, as we have argued, that a firm commitment to maintaining freedom of movement arrangements may have won significant support but would not have been the focus of the Brexit motion. The Labour Campaign for the Single Market did have more text submitted than the Labour Campaign for Free Movement but we cannot predict the compositing process nor what would have motivated a majority left-wing conference to choose to frame the debate.

Conference did vote on Brexit but this was to endorse the NEC statement which, much like Keir Starmer's speech, contained very little substance.

In conclusion he believes that the defeat of the reference back on staying in the Customs Union and European Economic Area are proof that had a motion been prioritised it would have fallen. Of course this was a possibility, but stopping a debate should be seen as a failure of the left leadership, not a success.

Keith Road

Pro-independence left?

Jamie Sims argues (*Solidarity* 450) that I made a false equivalence between Spanish and Catalan nationalism, written out the pro-independence left and given insufficient weight to Catalan civil disobedience.

Some of what he writes — how the Spanish government has interfered with Catalan self-government; how hostility to the rotten old post-Francoist order fed independence — I don't disagree with.

However in saying "whatever its flaws", the referendum "represented a massive act of collective disobedience by millions of Catalans", I don't think he answers my point. As far as anyone can tell, there is not a majority for independence, however impressively dedicated and courageous those in favour

may be. I continue to think that would present a democratic problem for a new state.

Regarding the pro-independence left: true, I was mainly talking about the Catalan government. Sims argues the pro-independence left, and in particular the CUP, has "maintained its autonomy from the pro-independence coalition government". But the "Together for Yes" coalition is precisely an alliance of right-wing and left-wing nationalists, and relies for its survival on a confidence and supply arrangement with... the CUP!

This is one of the reasons we need to be wary of nationalism — its tendency to pull the left into lending cross-class support to bourgeois governments, in the cause of "national" aims.

Tony Holmes

Stop Brexit!

Opinion polling on 10-11 October showed 64% saying that the Tory government is doing "badly" in negotiating Brexit, and only 21% saying it is doing "well".

47% said that, with hindsight, they thought the vote for Brexit in June 2016 was wrong, 40% that it was right.

Only a small minority say that Brexit will make Britain better off economically — only 23% overall, and only 12% of Labour voters. 44% think Brexit will make Britain worse off.

39% expect Brexit to be bad for jobs, 22% bad. 31% expect Britain to be bad for the NHS, 25% bad. Among Labour voters, 51% expect "bad for the NHS", 17% good. (bit.ly/brex-1011).

Meanwhile the Tories' talks with the EU are going badly.

On Thursday 19th and Friday 20th ministers, and then chiefs, from the 27 other EU states will hear a report from Brexit negotiations after five rounds of talks.

The EU 27 are insisting that the UK must promise a clear list of closing-the-account payments before they will even start discussing a new deal on trade.

That new deal itself will be difficult. Canada's trade deal with the EU, with much less baggage to impede it, took eight years to negotiate and ratify, and nearly collapsed.

There is no sign of progress towards the trade deals with other countries which the Brexiteers airily promised back in 2016. With right-wing nationalists like Trump gaining ground in many countries, the terrain is more difficult for such deals.

All that should be a signal for the left and the labour movement to start a drive to stop Brexit. We should oppose and harry the Tories at every point. We should demand — as some pro-EU Tories are already demanding — that any exit deal must be voted on by Parliament.

Not just in the my-way-or-the-highway alternative the Tories are offering — their deal or a crash exit with no deal at all.

And not just by Parliament. The June 2016 referendum had the defects of all referenda — a poor form of democracy. It was biased because 16-17 year olds and EU citizens resident in Britain were denied votes. It was run in a way which artificially limited the mass-media debate to a Tory-vs-Tory contest.

And on top of all that, it was a one-off vote

Pay cap lifted in the NHS

On Wednesday the 11 October Jeremy Hunt told the House of Commons that the 1% pay cap will be lifted for NHS staff.

After the government buckled under pressure and lifted the public sector pay cap for police and prison officers, the government had shown it was weak and it was only a matter of time before it was forced into lifting the cap for other workers.

Hunt has failed to say if the pay rise will be funded, or whether NHS employers will have to find the money within existing, too tight, budgets. So will NHS employers be left with the "choice" of making cuts elsewhere in order to fund pay rises?

Hunt has also refused to say how high a pay rise NHS workers should get. He also said that the pay rise will be linked to "productivity improvements", which suggests

about a very vaguely-sketched alternative.

Democracy means stopping elites like the Tories grabbing full power to make and shape things to their own liking from such vague mandates. The populace must retain its say. Minorities must retain a chance to become majorities.

Given we've already had the first referendum, probably the only way to stop the Tories trashing people's rights is a second referendum.

"A Labour MP", quoted by the *Financial Times* on 17 October, said: "the public would need another vote on whether to go ahead, given that the Leave camp had offered a more positive manifesto [than any possible exit deal] in June 2016... It would be a 'final say' now that we know the facts. The people would want to have the final say over all of this".

That MP also told the *FT*: "this would not be a 'second referendum', despite all appearances to the contrary". Huh? It would be second, and it would be a referendum, wouldn't it?

In any case, the MP is right. We didn't want the first referendum, but now it's happened we must demand a "final say" for the populace.

The alternative is to let the Tories have their way unchecked, to let them cancel the rights of EU citizens and of British citizens to be able to work and study in the EU, to let them make difficult-to-reverse decisions, all on the authority of an old referendum and the Parliamentary majority of a moment.

Our basic guideline should be working-class solidarity and social levelling-up across borders. Immediately, we should also be backing French workers in their battle against the very pro-EU but anti-worker Macron government.

Also, however, we cannot let the immediate issue of the re-raising of economic and social barriers, and the suppression of rights to free movement, wait on the general and longer-term issue of reorienting the labour movement towards a workers' Europe.

"Stop Brexit" and "Second referendum on any exit deal" should be immediate slogans, alongside "Freedom of movement".

On 12 October Jeremy Corbyn said that he would vote Remain in a second referendum, but in these terms: "There isn't going to be

the government wants workers to work more, or change their roles, just to get a near inflation-level pay rise.

The long running 1% public sector pay cap has been well and truly breached now, and other workers should be demanding their turn. Civil service workers are currently being balloted by the PCS union in an indicative ballot over pay. But the strongest section of the union, workers in the Department of Work and Pensions, are locked into a four-year pay deal, and the pay settlement date in HMRC passed in August and the government imposed the 1% cap.

With the Office of National Statistics announcing that inflation has hit a five-year high of 5%, when many public sector workers have had real-terms pay cuts of 15% since 2010, we are overdue a fightback on pay.



another referendum, so it's a hypothetical question but yes, I voted remain because I thought the best option was to remain. I haven't changed my mind on that".

Last week I met by chance, on a bus, a member of Corbyn's inner circle, someone I've known for decades. I can't quote him by name, because it was a conversation on a bus, not an on-the-record interview. But those who have followed Labour statements on Brexit will recognise his responses as only a snappier and more candid rendering of the official line.

What should Labour do about Brexit? Response: oppose the Tories, criticise the Tories at every step, wait and see, and avoid further commitment.

What if the Tory government falls before it can complete a deal? Won't Labour then have to say something definite? Response: long silence. Then: "That would be very difficult".

The Corbynista insider was sure of one thing: Labour cannot, must not, come out for stopping Brexit. Labour must equivocate in order to keep both its pro-Brexit and its anti-Macron government.

Brexit supporters on board.

This craven, manipulative approach to politics is incompatible with socialism, and unlikely to work in the long or even medium term.

Tens of thousands joined a "Stop Brexit" march at the Tory party conference on 1 October in Manchester — some of them chiming in with pro-EU Tories like Stephen Dorrell, some of them going on to join the anti-austerity march the same day.

So far there's still a majority for the re-signed view: Brexit will be not very good, or positively bad, but now we just have to go through with it.

That majority is beginning to break up. Probably it will wane and wax in the next months and years as the talks between the Tories and EU go worse or better.

A determined drive by the left and the labour movement can and should turn the majority into a minority, and stop Brexit.

Martin Thomas

Help us raise £20,000 to develop our website

The newly restructured Workers' Liberty website is online at www.workersliberty.org

Our website, including its extensive archive, aims to help build a different kind of socialist culture — one where discussion and self-education are cherished.

From Trotskyist newspapers of the 1940s and 50s, to older Marxist classics, to discussion articles on feminism, national questions, religion and philosophy and resources such as guidelines for Marxist reading groups — it's all there on the Workers' Liberty website.

To make our archive more accessible we have paid for professional help to make all content fully integrated, searchable by date and subject, and optimised for mobile reading. We still need to finance a website co-ordinator to ensure our coverage is up to the minute and shared on social media.

We have to raise £20,000 by our conference in November 2017. Any amount will help.

Thanks this week to Lesley Maher (£400) and to other donors, for a total of £451.



- If you would like to donate by paypal go to www.workersliberty.org/donate
- Or set up an internet bank transfer to "AWL", account 20047674 at Unity Trust Bank, Birmingham, 60-83-01 (please email awl@workersliberty.org to notify us of the payment and what it's for); or
- Send a cheque payable to "AWL" to AWL, 20E Tower Workshops, Riley Rd, London SE1 3DG (with a note saying what it's for).

The revolution betrayed

By Max Shachtman*

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 opened up a new epoch for humanity.

What no other social upheaval before it had ever dared to hope for, the Russian Revolution proclaimed boldly and confidently. Not the great French revolution, not even the Paris Commune of 1871, not even the rehearsal of the Russian Revolution in 1905, dreamed that it was the immediate forerunner of international socialism.

The Russian revolutionists of 1917, from their leaders down to the most obscure militant, did believe that they had only made the magnificent beginning, and that the flame they lighted would burn until it illuminated and warmed the whole earth with the victory of socialism.

But the promise of the Russian Revolution required for its fulfilment the victorious organisation of the revolution in all the great and advanced countries of the world. It was required, not only in order that the peoples everywhere might emerge from the blind alley into which capitalism had driven them, but in order that the revolution in Russia itself might establish a socialist order, and even less than that — *that the Russian revolution might be maintained at all.*

Every intelligent person understood this simple truth. That the two great titans of the Russian Revolution, Lenin and Trotsky, understood it, goes without saying. That the whole Bolshevik Party understood it is equally incontestable. Even the backward peasant understood that what he gained from the Bolshevik revolution was constantly in danger of being lost if imperialism abroad continued to remain in power.

Woodrow Wilson understood it, and so did Lloyd George and Winston Churchill and Georges Clemenceau and Benito Mussolini and the Emperor of Japan and all the other pillars of the old order, including Adolf Hitler, an obscure corporal in the German Imperial Army whose name was not known at that time to more than 50 people.

Was the immense confidence of the Bolsheviks in the world revolution mistaken? Before saying categorically "yes" or "no," it would be better to ask whether Lenin or Trotsky were right in arguing from 1914 onward, and especially from 1917 onward, that the world is living in a period of the final decay of capitalism, of dreadful wars, of socialist revolutions and of colonial uprisings.

The Bolsheviks' complete lack of confidence in capitalism's ability to restore the old, pre-war, more or less peaceful relationships has been confirmed over and over again in the last quarter of a century. For 24 years there has been one revolutionary uprising after another, with no continent, with hardly any one country, exempt.

But they were mistaken in their confidence, too. The Russian Revolution did indeed spread to other countries, but it was not triumphant. Each time it was crushed, and often with the greatest bloodshed.

Yet, wherein is the strength of capitalism represented? In our times, in one thing, and



Stalin murdered his enemies, the foremost of whom was Leon Trotsky

one thing only: in the weakness of the working class which is destined to destroy it. And wherein is the weakness of the working class represented? In its lack of numbers? Not at all; it is numerous enough to crush any enemy. In its social unimportance? No; it remains the indispensable foundation-stone of all modern society.

Its weakness is only in its lack of full class consciousness, in its lack of complete independence from the capitalist class, in its lack of fully independent class organisation, class program, class leadership and class aims.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The political name of that weakness, from 1914 on (and even earlier) and especially from 1917 on, was: the Social Democracy, the Second International.

It saved capitalism during and after the First World War. It mowed down the proletarian revolution in Western Europe with machine guns. It seduced and traduced the working class, trading on its past services to labour, on the inertia of traditionalism, on the short memory of the workers. It alternately beat the workers into unconsciousness with clubs or lulled them into paralytic sleep with soothing whispers that by careful medical treatment of the poisoned body of capitalism, by transfusing workers' blood into it, it would not only get well but become transformed painlessly into socialism.

By driving back the wave of revolutions that followed the war of 1914-1918 the capitalist class and its social-democratic assistants isolated the revolution from the rest of the world. The products of this isolation of the revolution are uniformly and universally reactionary.

Because the workers of Germany did not take power into their own hands, Hitlerism was imposed upon Germany and then upon the rest of Europe. Because the Chinese workers did not take power when they had the chance to do so, the rotten regime of Chiang Kai-shek kept the power, enfeebled China, facilitated the attack of the Japanese barbarians and helped in general to perpetuate the precarious rule of these barbarians in Japan itself. Because the French and British workers did not take power, they must now fight in an imperialist war against resurgent German imperialism and fight it under menacing handicaps. So it is throughout the world.

Not the least monstrous of the reactionary

products of Russia's isolation, however, is the growth and triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Capitalism's victory over the revolution in the west gave birth to the bureaucracy in Russia as a powerful social force. The bureaucracy, in turn, has repaid its capitalist midwife by invaluable services rendered to keep it in power throughout the world. What the social democracy could do for only a few years after the end of the war, Stalinism has succeeded in doing since 1923, for 18 long and horrible years.

Masquerading as revolutionary communists, defaming the names of Lenin and Bolshevism under which they operate, the Stalinist bureaucrats systematically undermined the revolutionary and labour movements in one country after another. They took up the work of the social democrats — often cooperating directly with them — in disrupting the unity of the working class.

Those organisations they could not dominate, they destroyed. Those revolutionary uprisings they could not misdirect, they crushed, as in Catalonia, with armed force. The hundreds of millions of colonial slaves who saw in the great Russian Revolution a beacon of liberty, they cynically betrayed to imperialism. The class-consciousness of a whole generation, they tore to shreds. Those they could not win to their ends by persuasion or intimidation or outright bribery, they sought to discredit and isolate by methods that any half-decent capitalist politician would hesitate to employ.

In Russia itself every trace of the great revolutionary promise of 1917 has literally been wiped out by reactionary force. The workers were reduced to the status of slaves, toiling under the despotism of the new ruling class, the bureaucracy. The peasants were made like serfs again, wiped out wholesale, by the millions, to suit the needs of the bureaucracy. For every big factory set up, another concentration camp rose to surround the victims of a totalitarian regime. All intellectual life was transformed into organized, compulsory bootlicking of a vulgar, vain and voracious autocracy, "with Comrade Stalin at its head."

A small section of the heroes of the Bolshevik Revolution was corrupted; by far the greater part of it that remained alive after the rigours of the civil war was decimated by Stalin. The noblest figures of October were sent to their graves by assassination, including our greatest contemporary, Leon Trotsky.

The October

By Paul Vernadsky*

In the early hours of 24 October the soviet seizure of power began.

This was not a response to the government's ill-conceived decision to launch punitive action against the Bolsheviks. The blueprint had already been drawn up by the Military Revolutionary Committee; insurrectionary forces were to seize the Marinskii Palace and disperse the pre-parliament. Then the Winter Palace was to be surrounded, ministers arrested and the Provisional Government overthrown.

Red Guards and pro-soviet soldiers were mobilised to control the bridges over the river and key buildings such as railway stations were occupied. Trotsky's plan focused on defensive measures designed to guarantee that the congress of soviets opened as scheduled on the following day.

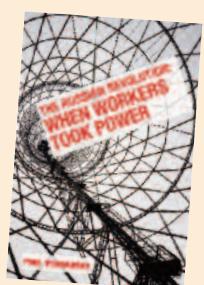
Around midnight the insurrection shifted from defensive to offensive action. This was connected to two events: 1. a growing realisation that the government was much weaker than had previously been thought and that the city was coming under the physical control of soldiers and Red Guards rallying to the defence of the soviet, and 2. the arrival of Lenin at soviet headquarters.

Lenin's arrival dramatically changed the situation. The Bolshevik soviet leaders shifted from a defensive posture about 2am on the morning of 25 October. In response, the government managed to assemble only a small force of military cadets, officers, Cossacks, and a detachment of the women's battalions to protect the Winter Palace and key buildings.

Kerensky's exit was pathetic. On the morning of 25 October he paced the rooms of the Winter Palace in an overcoat, issuing ministers with instructions. He wanted to leave the city to meet the troops coming from the front for the defence of the Provisional Government. One of his adjutants requisitioned a car belonging to the American embassy. Kerensky "made off in this car, which carried the American flag and aided by this disguise, slipped through the numerous Bolshevik patrols which were already active in the city".

On the afternoon of 25 October the Winter Palace was besieged. However, the socialist journalist John Reed and three other Americans bluffed their way in and wandered around the palace talking to various people, before walking back out past Red Guards and soldiers.

The battleship Aurora, then anchored in the Neva river, responded by firing a blank round from its bow gun. Most of the shells



* An extract from *The Russian Revolution, When Workers Took Power*, by Paul Vernadsky. Available for £14.80 including postage from www.workersliberty.org/books

* Abridged from *Labor Action*, Vol. V No. 46, November 1941.

October revolution: taking power and holding on



Clockwise from above: participants in the October revolution, Red Guards and Lenin, who was the leading Bolshevik figure in the elected Congress of Soviets.



fired exploded spectacularly but harmlessly, but one shattered a cornice on the palace and another smashed a third-floor corner window, exploding just above the room in which the government was meeting.

Finally, during the late evening, the insurgents filtered into the palace in small numbers, rather than actually "storming" it (as depicted in subsequent fictional romanticised paintings and films).

The losses in the taking of the Winter Palace were negligible: five sailors and one soldier killed and a number slightly wounded among the assailants.

SECOND CONGRESS OF SOVIETS

While the Provisional Government was under siege the second congress of soviets began to assemble.

In his recollections of Lenin published in 1924, Trotsky wrote: "The first session of the second congress of soviets was sitting in Smolny. Lenin did not appear here. He remained in one of the rooms of Smolny in which... there was for some reason no furniture, or almost none. Later somebody spread blankets on the floor and put two cushions on them, Vladimir Ilych and I took a rest there lying side-by-side."

According to a preliminary report to the credentials committee, 300 of the 670 delegates were Bolsheviks, 193 were SRs (of whom more than half were Left SRs), 68 were Mensheviks and 14 were Menshevik-Internationalists. More than 500 came to Petrograd committed in principle to supporting the transfer of "all power to the soviets".

The wait for the Winter Palace to be taken meant the opening of the congress was delayed. The congress endorsed Martov's motion, calling for the creation of a democratic coalition government by negotiation. However, a succession of speakers, representatives of the formerly dominant moderate socialist bloc, rose up to denounce the Bolsheviks.

These speakers declared their intention to immediately walk out of the congress as a means of opposing the Bolshevik action.

The new soviet central executive committee was elected, with the Bolsheviks initially taking 62 seats, the Left SRs 29 and 10 were divided among the Menshevik-Internationalists and other left groups. The soviet cabinet was dubbed the "council of people's commissars" (Sovnarkom) by Trotsky and began to outline a programme of government.

The old regime did not go quietly and some sections took up arms to fight the new workers' government. The Petrograd city council formed a "committee for salvation of the fatherland and revolution".

On the morning of 29 October Petrograd awoke to sporadic bursts of rifle fire and the fighting was considerably bloodier than on the day of the revolution. About 200 were killed and wounded on both sides in the storming of the Vladimir junker school (a military academy), which put up especially stubborn resistance.

Some of the junkers were thrown from the roofs and killed by enraged red forces, although Antonov-Ovseenko kept his word to ensure the safety of the junkers who had arrested him in the telephone station when they were obliged to surrender.

Meanwhile Kerensky managed to obtain the support of a small Cossack force under General Pyotr Krasnov's command and persuade them to march on Petrograd. Ironically, these were units of the same cavalry corps that Kornilov had relied on against Kerensky in August. The key battle between Krasnov's thousand-strong Cossack force and the revolutionary forces army ten times larger, made up of workers' detachments, soldiers of the Petrograd garrison, and Baltic sailors, took place on 30 October on the Polkovo Heights, 12 miles from Petrograd.

The leader of the Baltic sailors, Pavel Dybenko, offered the demoralised Cossacks a



deal: swap Kerensky for safe passage to their homes in the south. Learning of this, Kerensky fled once more, disguised in a sailor's uniform wearing driving goggles. He was utterly discredited.

OPPOSITION

Other opposition came from within the labour movement.

On 29 October Vikzhel, the all-Russian executive committee of the union of railway workers, issued an ultimatum, calling for negotiations between the Bolsheviks and the parties that had voluntarily withdrawn from the soviet. The Bolsheviks for their part felt that they needed to accept the proposal and entered into talks.

However, the Mensheviks and SRs took a hard position, demanding repudiation of the seizure of power on 25 October and insisting that the new all-socialist government formed must not include Lenin or Trotsky.

In Moscow the Bolsheviks were less prepared for a revolutionary seizure of power. They had a majority in the workers' soviet, but not the separate soldiers' soviet, and so

support from the garrison was uncertain. However the Moscow workers' soviet voted to support the Petrograd MRC's seizure of power and to create its own version. The fighting in Moscow was bitter, symbolised by the shooting of several dozen pro-soviet fighters after they surrendered in the Kremlin on 28 October. Red Guards fought with tenacity.

The total number of deaths in Moscow was never established, but probably ran to several hundred dead and others wounded. By 2 November, when victory was assured in Moscow, the Bolsheviks had gained tentative control over a belt of territory across north-central European Russia.

The new workers' government was extremely productive in the first two months of its existence. It issued no fewer than 116 different decrees by the turn of the year. On the first day after the seizure of power decrees on land and peace were passed and the death penalty abolished.

On 27 October a temporary decree establishing press control was passed and two days later the new government decreed an eight-hour work day.

On 2 November it issued the "declaration of the rights of the peoples of Russia", for the right of self-determination for Russia's various nationalities.

A decree on 10 November abolished the many social, legal and civil distinctions, ranks and titles that were part of old Russia, while church schools were transferred to the people's commissariat of education by decree on 11 November.

Full separation of church and state followed in January.

The decree on workers' control was passed on 14 November.

On 22 November the old judicial system was abolished and replaced by new "people's courts".

On 16 December a decree abolished all ranks and titles in the army and provided for the election of commanders.

The marriage decree on 18 December introduced civil marriages and non-religious weddings, and made it easier to get divorced.

Vote Richard Leonard for SLP Leader

SCOTLAND

By Dale Street

Supporting nominations from Constituency Labour Parties in the Scottish Labour Party (SLP) leadership contest closed on 13 October. Richard Leonard had 42, compared with 16 for Anas Sarwar.

The right-wing Community trade union backed Sarwar. All other unions which submitted a supporting nomination backed Leonard. Leonard also has a narrow majority of nominations from the seven Scottish Labour MPs, while Sarwar enjoys a majority of nominations from MSPs and councillors.

Leonard is the left-wing candidate in the contest. Although not a member of the Campaign for Socialism (which doubles up as the Scottish "wing" of Momentum), he has a solid track record of promoting left-wing policies and is contesting the election on a

leftist platform.

Unlike Sarwar, whose record of political activity scarcely goes beyond having been an MSP for a year and an MP for five years before that, Leonard also has an established record of over three decades of activity in the labour movement.

Sarwar presents himself as the "centrist" unity candidate. In fact, he is the rallying point for the most right-wing elements within the SLP.

It says much about the lack of confidence of the Labour right that its candidate – who called on Corbyn to resign in last year's leadership contest – now has to present himself as a loyal Corbyn supporter who will help propel Corbyn into Downing Street.

Sarwar's campaign has failed to pick up traction. Much of the centre ground, and even some of the soft right, have backed Leonard at CLP meetings.

This is partly because of Anas Sarwar's past shares in, and dividends from, his family firm (which fails to recognise a trade union

and pay the Scottish Living Wage). And partly because Leonard is seen as "not as bad as" Corbyn.

But Leonard's lead amongst nominations from CLPs and trade unions does not guarantee him victory.

Only a small proportion of SLP members attend CLP meetings. And recent weeks have seen a substantial influx of new members, under the SLP's "special offer" of membership for £1 a month (with no requirement to remain a member longer than the time needed to cast a vote).

MUDSLINGING

The worst of Sarwar's supporters have now opted for transforming the SLP leadership contest into a re-run of last year's national contest, by throwing out unfounded allegations with a total disregard for the damage which they inflict on the SLP itself.

Edinburgh South Labour MP and Progress member Ian Murray has claimed that the

election contest was being "rigged" to favour Leonard. He also demanded that Alex Rowley resign as SLP deputy leader because he lacked "impartiality".

The "rigging" allegation related to Unite signing up Labour Party affiliated supporters. Like all affiliated trade unions, Unite was required by the SLP to delete its database of affiliated supporters and begin the process from scratch again.

Unite made an initial mistake in the procedure for signing up affiliated supporters, which was subsequently rectified. But this was enough for Murray to unleash the allegation of "rigging".

Murray's attack on Rowley was based on a covert recording of a private conversation in which Rowley said that he backed Leonard.

Rather than condemn the covert recording of a private conversation, Murray chose to attack Rowley (whose support for Leonard was already well-known).

1980s ozone layer to return by... 2050

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

Good news! The ozone hole is shrinking at last, a rare success for collective action in response to scientific evidence.¹

Unfortunately, it will take until 2050 to return to its 1980 levels. This is because the chemicals largely responsible for its depletion are very stable and those already released will persist in the atmosphere until then, even if no more emissions take place.

It's 30 years since the signing of the Montreal Protocol which aimed to tackle the problem of the accelerating destruction of the ozone layer by chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Ozone in the stratosphere absorbs most of the Sun's ultraviolet radiation (UVR) and without it life would be difficult or impossible except several metres below the surface of the oceans.

Ozone (O_3) is made from oxygen (O_2) by the action of UVR in the stratosphere. But for there to be oxygen in the stratosphere there first had to be oxygen in the lower atmosphere and this only appeared when Earth was about half the age it is now, with the evolution of photosynthesis by bacteria in the oceans. These produced oxygen as a waste product which gradually began to accumulate in the atmosphere. Ozone started to accumulate also and by half a billion years ago was absorbing enough UVR for the land to become habitable.

Scientists only became aware of these facts with:

- the prediction and then discovery of different types of light (radiation) with different wavelengths;
- the development of spectroscopy, the study of how matter absorbs and emits light; and
- the understanding of how hot objects emit energy in the form of light.

These were mostly the result of curiosity-driven research.

It was realised that the Sun should emit radiation of different wavelengths in the proportions predicted for the spectrum of a "black body" of the same temperature (about

5500 degrees Celsius). Spectroscopy showed that it did, with the puzzling exception of a region of wavelengths shorter than 310 nanometres, just beyond the violet region. This, the UV region, was about 1% of the predicted intensity. This meant that about 99% of UVR was being absorbed by something and an exhaustive search of likely chemical substances found that ozone was largely responsible.

The amount of ozone differs in different parts of the world and at different times of year, as does the intensity of UVR, so the amount of UVR reaching the ground is variable. In general, UVR is highest when the Sun is higher in the sky, i.e. in equatorial regions and during summer in northern and southern regions.

MIDGLEY

The UVR that gets through can be damaging to life, including humans in whom it causes sunburn, cataracts, and potentially fatal skin cancers.

Many humans have melanin pigment in their skin which can absorb UVR before damage can occur but lighter-skinned people in high-UVR regions are at risk. Australia and New Zealand have the highest rates of melanoma in the world. It was therefore alarming to learn in 1985 that there was a great hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica. However, the story started earlier.

Refrigerators use the evaporation and condensation of liquids to transfer heat from the contents to the outside (you may have noticed warmth from the back of a fridge). Early fridges used easily liquefied gases such as methyl chloride, ammonia or sulfur dioxide, but these were toxic if released. Chemist Thomas Midgley² developed the efficient synthesis of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) around 1930 and proposed their use as safe refrigerants. CFCs are very unreactive which is excellent for a refrigerant. Midgley demonstrated their safety by inhaling some and blowing out a candle. However, if released when a fridge is damaged or scrapped, their very stability means that CFCs persist in the atmosphere, eventually reaching the stratosphere.

Here the problem starts: a CFC molecule

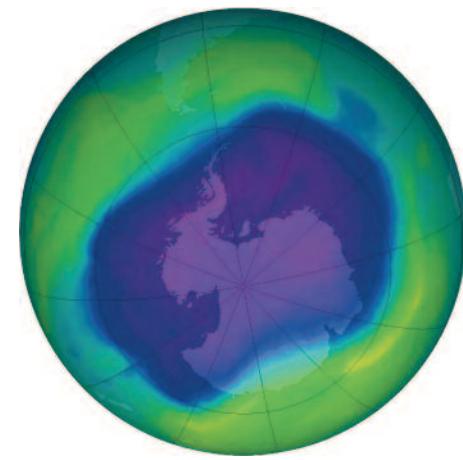
such as Freon (Cl_2F_2C) is hit by a UV photon and a chlorine atom (Cl) is knocked out. If this collides with an ozone molecule, it grabs an oxygen atom to make a ClO molecule, leaving an ordinary oxygen molecule that doesn't absorb UVR. The ClO collides with another ozone molecule, making more O_2 and regenerating the original Cl atom... which can now repeat the process with more ozone. The Cl is thus a catalyst for the breakdown of ozone. Each cycle removes two ozone molecules and there can be thousands of cycles before the Cl atom collides with something else and the process stops.

This was realised in the '70s but no-one knew if the effect was significant until the late Joe Farman and colleagues found a massive hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica. The levels had dropped by some 40% in about ten years. Farman had been measuring the levels for about five years, first fearing that his instruments were faulty. NASA had failed to detect the drop as its computer software was programmed to ignore "unusual" readings.

The clear threat was that, as thinning of the layer spread, organisms would be affected by the increased UVR, particularly UVB. This would affect plant growth, harm populations of plankton in the upper levels of the oceans, and cause increased skin cancers and cataracts. Australia would be the first to be affected, with potential epidemic levels of skin cancer.

Due to different weather patterns, the Arctic had not yet developed an ozone hole but would eventually if nothing changed as the amount has also declined. Farman published his results in 1985 and, despite the opposition of the chemicals industry, the Montreal Protocol phasing out CFCs was signed in 1987. Readers may be surprised to learn that Margaret Thatcher played a positive role in this.³

It will take a long time for the ozone layer to return to its original thickness. In the meantime, we must make sure that governments and businesses adhere to the Montreal Protocol. But there is another problem: CFCs are actually more potent "greenhouse" gases than carbon dioxide and some of their ozone-friendly replacements, such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), are even worse. Phasing out CFCs has already reduced the rate of global



The shrinking ozone hole

warming. One option is to amend the Montreal Protocol to include HFCs (they are already in the Kyoto Protocol) but the alternatives also have their own problems.

Propane/methylpropane mixtures are very effective refrigerants but are flammable (but then so is methane, piped to most houses in the UK).

Notes:

- <http://www.unep.org/stories/story/still-fresh-30-ozone-hole-healing-montreal-protocol-takes-climate-change>
- Thomas Midgley had "form." In 1921, he showed that tetraethyl lead when added to petrol prevented the damaging phenomenon of engine "knock." Despite knowing of its toxicity Midgley insisted that it was safe. It was marketed as "Ethyl" with no mention of lead. Midgley then inadvertently initiated the destruction of the ozone layer through CFCs. It has been said that he "had more impact on the atmosphere than any other single organism in Earth's history."
- You won't often hear a good word from me about Margaret Thatcher but with a Chemistry degree and PhD, this may have partly explained why she protected the funding of the British Antarctic Survey. She could also understand the scientific evidence about CFCs and supported the Montreal Protocol. She also supported UK's membership of CERN and the establishment of the IPCC to research climate change.

Experience and revolutionary politics

This article by Louise O'Shea from the Australian fortnightly paper *Red Flag* outlines the important but unstable role of experience in revolutionary politics. Abridged and reprinted here to promote discussion.

The label "identity politics" is applied to a range of positions and practices, the key unifying features of which are sectional approaches to challenging oppression and the prioritisation of subjective experience.

These can be highly theorised or simply reflect a common sense based on what seem like readily observable truths: that the world is divided between people who suffer oppression and those who do not, and that group interests flow from multiple sectional divides. For example, the fact women are oppressed makes men at best constitutionally disinterested in women's liberation or at worst culpable in their oppression. So it goes for other forms of oppression.

The way in which identity politics is expressed changes over time. In the 1960s separatism was a key manifestation, in particular among women and, later, lesbian women. Marcus Garvey's Pan-African movement, which encouraged Blacks in the US to return to Africa to be free of racism, was an earlier example of a similar political outlook.

Today, separatism doesn't attract much support. Much more widespread is a form of identity politics in which experience (often emphasised with the entirely superfluous adjective "lived") is accorded primacy, endowing an unquestionable validity upon the subjects and their analytical and strategic approach to oppression.

A recent example demonstrates this point of view.

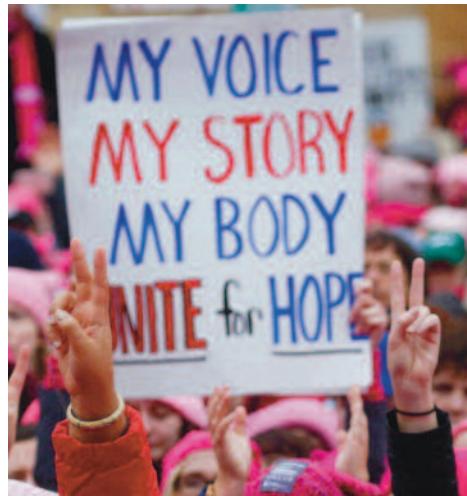
One is a statement released by the refugee advocacy group Refugees, Survivors and Ex-Detainees (known as RISE) in the lead-up to the Palm Sunday march, traditionally the largest pro-refugee demonstration of the year. As part of a demand for greater RISE representation on the speaking platform, the group argued:

"RISE is the only organisation within Australia that is entirely governed by refugees, asylum seekers and ex-detainees. The work that we do is underpinned by our belief in the power and necessity of self-determination. It is integral that the voices of those with lived experiences are amplified, leading the conversation on all matters pertaining to refugees ... It is a movement like RISE that should be placed at the fore of the refugee advocacy space."

An article supportive of this statement, published in Community Four, further elaborates this position:

"Over time these communities have taught us that effective and sustainable change for the oppressed only truly comes when they themselves take control of their own movement. This is because they are the ones that live with the daily reality of oppression and are the ones that will have to live with any change that is achieved (unlike those of us who can switch the lights off and go home at the end of the day as truly free citizens). It is their diverse voices that we need to listen to before taking another step forward."

The theme here is, first, that experience of oppression confers an incontrovertible authority that alone qualifies a person to speak, analyse and present strategies to challenge or eliminate oppression. Second is that those



who do not share this experience can do no more than play a passive role supporting those who do, or else become complicit in the problem.

Like other varieties of identity politics, it links the validity of any argument to the identity of the person making it. What is being said becomes a second rate consideration to who is saying it.

The problem with this approach is that, on its own, experience is an inadequate foundation from which to develop an analysis of oppression or to devise political strategies to end it.

In part, this is because the experience of oppression is not uniform, and the oppressed are not a homogeneous bloc. In reality, there are as many experiences as there are individuals who suffer oppression.

[For example] the experience of a refugee who has spent years languishing in detention and one who has managed to avoid this ordeal are very different, although equally valid, examples of the refugee experience.

Political strategies based on subjective experience will tend to arbitrarily elevate certain experiences over others, reduce the complex reality of oppression to a mere stereotype or become overwhelmed to the point that the coherence of the oppressed group itself is called into question.

Attempts to determine which experience is "authentic" or properly representative are highly problematic. Rather than capturing some pure reality of oppression, they more often reflect the broader prejudices – or the political agendas – of those people making the determinations.

The second problem with this approach, related to the first, is that the way in which individuals respond to their experience of oppression can vary widely, even when the experience is very similar.

The experience of oppression can, for example, lead to an acceptance, whole or partial, of a particular group's subordinate place in society, whether because individuals have internalised their oppression or because they feel they have no choice but to adapt to the apparently unassailable status quo.

Entirely understandably, many refugees respond to their oppression by more eagerly embracing their adopted country and its culture and institutions to demonstrate their gratitude or because they feel that to do otherwise might provoke hostility. This can be the case even though the very same country and its institutions may have brutalised them in their efforts to gain asylum.

Likewise, many women pro-actively impose sexist norms and values on other women, despite experiencing the negative effects of sexism themselves. It is overwhelmingly mothers, for example, who socialise

young women into the "appropriate" — i.e. usually sexist — ways for women to look and behave.

But the experience of oppression can also have the opposite effect. Under the right circumstances, it can politicise people and incline them towards rebellion. You only have to think of the daring acts of the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s or the protests and riots in offshore detention centres. The sense of injustice born from experience can transform an individual into an activist and fighter against the powers that be, just as much as it can force them into submission.

The way in which the oppressed respond to their experience of oppression is thus highly subjective. It can be influenced by personal factors, other aspects of the individual such as their class position or political background and the broader political climate in which they are immersed. This is reflected in the various and divergent political manifestations of resistance to oppression: there are conservative women's groups and radical ones. There are refugee groups that campaign against the government, and others that attempt to curry favour with it.

Finally, the causes of oppression cannot be elucidated from experience alone. It is not possible to understand the workings of the whole economy from the vantage point of one workplace, nor is it possible to develop an appreciation of the multitude of structural factors that underpin women's oppression from the sexist realities of daily life.

To understand complex social reality, it is necessary to move beyond the limits of experience.

Expecting to derive any meaningful understanding of oppression by passively listening to the experiences of the oppressed is doomed to chronic confusion and ultimate failure. So too is elevating to a principle the belief that experience alone gives an individual exclusive insight into what is needed to remedy oppression and understand its causes.

OPPRESSION

This is not to say that the experience of oppression does not matter or that those who do not experience oppression should or can provide any greater clarity.

Rather, it highlights that experience alone cannot adequately inform an analysis of oppression or a political strategy to fight it. Such an analysis must be arrived at through argument and debate among the oppressed, and those who share the goal of liberation. Ultimately, analysis and strategy must be tested in practice through the experience of struggle as well as by reference to historical experience.

In this process, experience undoubtedly plays a role. It is self-evident that those who experience oppression are best placed to describe the way in which it is perpetuated, both overtly and via more subtle means, and understand the deleterious effects it can have. This can help others become better attuned to the social realities of oppression, which in turn helps to create a more inclusive political environment.

The common experience of members of oppressed groups, even in very different social circumstances, also confirms that structural discrimination is what underpins a particular group's subordinate position, not merely bad luck, individual failings or general social disadvantage. This helps to identify the problem and highlight what is needed to achieve liberation.

The experience of oppression further has the potential to politicise those who suffer it. It can provide important insights into the way in which power is deployed and inequality maintained, which is harder to observe by those who are spared such treatment. And it can push people to resist – without resistance there can be no liberation.

Often, although certainly not always, oppression can lead to greater empathy with other groups subject to similar treatment, even if those empathising are themselves not directly affected.

The experience of oppression can equip people to better recognise the operation of power and control, or the common social consequences of it. This raises the potential for solidarity and can help make clear the need for an integrated theory of society that can account for different forms of oppression, the interests that connect them and the strategies needed to combat them. That is, it can push people toward an understanding of social inequality that goes beyond their own narrow experience.

A white person could not have been Martin Luther King Jnr and a straight person could not have been Harvey Milk. When members of an oppressed group challenge their oppression, it is much more compelling for others who are not yet part of the resistance. Their experience imbues them with a greater moral authority among those they are attempting to lead, which is why struggles against oppression tend to be strongest when they are led by those who suffer it.

To win liberation, the active participation of a critical mass of the oppressed is essential, and inconceivable without the emergence of leaders from among these same social layers.

But this isn't because only the oppressed, by virtue of their experience, possess the necessary insight into their oppression to lead a struggle. Martin Luther King Jnr wasn't a great leader of the oppressed because of any particular experience or because his was more "authentic" than that of other would-be leaders, but because he could rouse people, raise their confidence to fight and their sense of hope. This came from his broader social vision, analysis and political influences.

Likewise, the successes of women's rights' struggles in the 1960s were connected with the strength of the trade union movement and the overall climate of rebellion, which shaped the political approach of activists just as much as their experience tended to.

A theory of oppression and struggle for liberation is strongest when it is built on a theory of society that can account for all forms of oppression and inequality, identify accurately their causes and provide a strategy for liberation. The strength of any such theory can only be tested by history and in ongoing struggle.

Experience alone is an inadequate starting point from which to develop such a theory. It is not sufficient to be concerned only with that which you have experience of, or to passively take a lead from those with no other qualification than belonging to an oppressed group.

All those committed to liberation and social equality have an obligation to actively engage with, question and test different theories of society and oppression, and learn from the lessons of struggle that have tested these historically and in the here and now. This can't be done without moving beyond the narrow politics of identity and experience.

Where we stand

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

The capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class must unite to struggle against capitalist power in the workplace and in wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses and to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. For reproductive justice: free abortion on demand; the right to choose when and whether to have children. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!



Events

Friday 20 October

The Russian Revolution 100 years on — London Forum
7.30pm, Room 675, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
bit.ly/OctForum

Monday 23 October

Is socialism possible?
6.30pm, The Trent House, 1-2 Leazes Lane, Newcastle NE1 4QT
bit.ly/2greJ61

Wednesday 25 October

Sheffield students support the Eastern Avenue Jobcentre strike
7.30am, 19 Eastern Avenue, Sheffield S2 2FZ
bit.ly/2ij0T9V

Saturday 28 October

Beyond the Backstreet: Fighting for Abortion Rights 50 Years
10am, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London E1 6LA
bit.ly/2iiNWwC

Wednesday 15 November

National demo: Free Education Now — Tax The Rich
1pm, Assemble Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX
bit.ly/2yvbmEU

Saturday 18 November

Surround Yarl's Wood demo
Coaches from London
bit.ly/2ghkSRZ

Have an event you want listing? Email:
solidarity@workersliberty.org

Open up the democracy review

LABOUR

By Keith Road

Former left MP Katy Clark will be leading on the Labour Party democracy review but the terms of the review are not yet clear.

Rule change motions that were remitted by conference will all be left on the table. Similar promises of a democratic review were made in 2010, with bad results. However with the Corbyn leadership firmly at the helm, there is hope for more thoroughgoing and democratic reform.

As selection procedures will not form part of the review, there will be no discussion of mandatory re-selection or reform of the trigger ballot procedures. It is unclear if CLPs will be asked to make submissions, exactly what role the National Executive, leadership, Parliamentary Labour Party, unions and so on will play.

What would thoroughgoing democratic change in the Party look like? In 2011 the Labour Party launched Refounding Labour. Chaired by Peter Hain, this process was ostensibly able to review everything including the "Partnership in Power" structure introduced by Blair in 1997. Unsurprisingly it failed to deliver



Labour Party conference 2017

very much at all.

At the time the Labour Party Democracy Task Force was set up by CLPD and others, including supporters of Workers' Liberty, to write its own submission and to campaign for real democratic change. Many of its broader proposals are still relevant today.

The task of the review should be to empower members to run the party. This means it should discuss not only selection procedures for MPs but move towards a conference that is focused on discussing policy and debates. This means being able to discuss actual policy resolutions and not contemporary motions that must refer to an event on a specific date. Rule changes should be heard the year they are submitted and implemented fol-

lowing conference.

Conference should have the right to not just refer back the National Policy Forum documents but to delete and amend whole sections. If an elected policy development is needed, the opaque and poorly functioning NPF would not be it!

The current review will report directly to Corbyn and to the Party Chair Ian Lavery and should be completed before next September in time for the 2018 conference.

It is vital that activists start to argue in the local branches and CLPs to have control over the process and to start a debate on the kind of reform we need now.

• For the "A Living, Breathing Party" submission to Refounding Labour see bit.ly/2zvFwWI

Left debates at Young Labour

By a delegate

Around 200 delegates attended the 2017 Young Labour Policy Conference at Warwick University over the weekend of 15-15 October.

In a marked change from previous years the mood of the conference was left wing. The conference voted for free education, shrugging off the attempts of the much-reduced Blairite faction to garner support for their graduate tax policy. Likewise, the conference voted to leave NATO — a clear break from the foreign policy of recent years.

The conference revealed three political tendencies: a Blairite right wing organised around activists from Labour Students, now very much on the back foot; a diverse "middle" tendency broadly influenced by the politics of Momentum and the leadership of Unite; and a left wing current grouped around supporters of the *Clarion* magazine, that put forward clearer class-struggle socialist ideas, including some supporters of Workers' Liberty. In votes on many bread-and-butter class-struggle issues such as the *Clarion* supporters' call for the nationalisation of the banks, the conference was a left-right fight, with the Blairites on one side and the centre-left and the hard left on the other. But differences within the centre-left came out in two impor-

tant debates: on freedom of movement and Israel-Palestine.

The motion on free movement submitted by Clarion supporters pointed out that migration did not cause falling wages, called for Labour to oppose an end to free movement and to close down detention centres.

FREE MOVEMENT

This motion met with demagogic opposition, including from the Unite Young Members delegation.

They made conservative arguments packed with left-sounding jargon — i.e. that migration in fact did suppress wages (a notion with no basis in fact) and that freedom of movement had been invented "by capitalists, for capitalists" and that therefore locking workers behind national borders would be preferable. Sadly, the motion fell, although a subsequent motion, more limited in scope, about defending migrant workers' rights, passed.

Conference also voted against a socialist motion on Israel-Palestine. It called for an end to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, an independent Palestinian state, and support for the workers' movement in both countries, such as radical binational unions like WAC-Ma'an. Speakers opposed the motion on the grounds that Israeli

Jews had to be removed from formerly Arab lands for justice to be done — a superficially "militant" position, but one which, carried to its logical conclusion, would lead to genocidal war, bitter enmity towards most of the world's Jews, and no prospect of improvement in the lives of most Palestinians (who overwhelmingly support a two-state solution). Bizarrely, some particularly sectarian professional "left-wing" Israel-baiters slandered the internationalist trade union WAC-Ma'an as "Zionist" for having Israeli-Jewish members.

At one point in the conference, some supporters of Workers' Liberty voted against a motion that called for the application of the 1967 Abortion Rights Act to Northern Ireland. That was a mistake. Workers' Liberty has long supported the extension of the Act to Northern Ireland, and abortion rights for all women all over the world.

The growth of the broad left in Young Labour is to be warmly welcomed. But the debate on free movement and Israel-Palestine shows the need for a fight for socialist, internationalist politics.

Moreover, for the debates at this conference to have meaning, more Young Labour groups need to be set up at the constituency level, and organise meaningful and attractive socialist activity in working-class communities.

Cinema workers empowered

By a Picturehouse worker

On Sunday 15 October Picturehouse workers at five London sites struck, and protested at the closing gala of the London Film Festival.

We had large "billboard" placards (as the closing gala hosted the premier of 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri'), visible across the red carpet crowds. We linked arms to physically block entrances to festival venues including the red carpets. We sent paper planes with our messages flying onto the red carpet. We let off smoke flares. We organised the demonstration specifically to be noisy and disruptive.

The summer is a quiet time for the cinema industry, and also therefore for the strike. The London Film Festival (LFF) represents the start of a busy period of big releases, which we hope to target.

After spreading to six sites in the last year the strike has not grown for a while; we have had the same number of sites and members for some time. However the LFF strikes show a considerable deepening of militancy and determination. For the first time our meetings discussed plans not simply to provide symbolic protest but to disrupt, representing a real turn in attitudes.

After the demonstrations during London Film Festival we feel empowered and energised by this more radical turn. To win the strike we need more sites on strike. We have the energy, commitment and persistence to get them recruited.

We targeted the London Film Festival to get it to pull out of using Picturehouse cinemas, and to get other film festivals to follow suit.



We certainly caused a huge amount of embarrassment and disruption to LFF. Festival organisers have already privately communicated to us that they are rethinking their use of Picturehouse. We will be targeting other festivals and events in the same way. The business model of the Picturehouse is particularly reliant on special events, such as film festivals, more so than other chains.

The summer is very hard time to recruit cinema workers to the union. Work is relatively seasonal, with a lot of sites running with minimum staffing levels in the summer months, and the company lets go as many staff as it can to keep the wage bill down. Most staff are doing fewer hours and their mind is not on their Picturehouse working life.

Now dozens of new staff are being recruited shaking up the makeup of each site. Workers are taking more regular shifts, and their mind is very much on the job and the conditions they work in. Community support campaigns

trying to recruit people to Bectu might find they start having better luck now with more people on shift and new faces.

Community support has been increasingly important to the strike. Both for putting pressure on the company and giving confidence to tired strikers who felt alone. The direct action and community picket lines has been wonderful to see. The company seems more worried at the moment about this unknown element than it does about us.

From the company's perspective the community demonstrators come out of nowhere and the company can't use its normal tactic of legal threats and bullying. The company has been sending repeated demands to Bectu demanding Bectu put a stop to it and police community actions. Bectu of course can't do this even if it wanted to, as these are outside of the union's control: a situation the company cannot plan for.

We are now planning our next set of strikes. Watch this space.

School strips workers of sick pay

By Patrick Murphy, National Education Union executive

School workers at a London Academy will strike to win proper entitlements to sick pay.

Workers at Charlton Park Academy, in Greenwich, found that, since becoming an academy, the school is abandoning sick leave conditions contained in the Burgundy Book (for teachers) and the Green Book (for support staff). While some staff have TUPE protection which means they continue to have the previous conditions, new staff do not. For many staff this means being out of pocket within a month of ill-health. One member of staff who was injured at work found that she was on Statutory Sick Pay (£89.35) after only 20 days and had to pay her rent with a credit card.

The attitude of the employer is Dickensian. The Chair of Governors, Graham Harknett, wrote to parents recently to boast that the

school had offered to pay staff an extra £15 per month to allow them to buy their own sickness insurance through money-market.com!

The new Sickness Procedure also states that where a worker is signed off with stress, depression, or anxiety as a result of a grievance, performance, or disciplinary issue, they may find that sick pay has been stopped. As one member of staff at CPA explained: "This is a bully's charter — managers can bully us, threaten disciplinary and capability, and make us ill and then refuse to pay us our sick pay entitlements".

Members of the GMB and the National Education Union (NEU) struck together last summer term and plan more strikes this term. The GMB will strike on 17 October and the NEU are currently balloting. A joint GMB-NEU campaign has been launched which includes public meetings, video clips and social media promotions as well as the strikes.

School management have claimed accepting the unions' demands for a fair and equal pay policy for all staff would lead to redundancies because of the cost. This is scaremongering for which not a shred of evidence has been produced but it highlights once again how cuts and underfunding are used to force workers into a race to the bottom.

Workers and their unions at Charlton Park Academy need your support and solidarity.

- Messages of support to NEU rep, Aliye Neal and GMB rep Tony Smith can be sent via secretary@greenwich.nut.org.uk.

- The campaign is also raising money to help GMB members who do not receive full sustentation for strikes. Please send cheques payable to Greenwich Teachers Association to Graham Trafford (Treasurer), Greenwich NEU, Eltham Centre, 2 Archery Road, London, SE9 1HA

DOO strikes grow again



By a railworker

Guards on Northern, Merseyrail, Southern, and Greater Anglia struck on 3 and 5 October in the on going dispute over Driver-Only Operation (DOO) of trains.

On Greater Anglia workers will begin an overtime ban for four weeks. This is a tactic which needs to be extended to all the other franchises involved in the DOO dispute. Workers on South West trains have voted for strikes and are set to join the next round of strikes: these should be announced now in order to build pressure on the rail companies and the government.

On Southern Rail, drivers' union

Aslef has also been involved in the dispute, but has repeatedly pulled its members out of strikes for talks with the employer. Statements about these talks are vague, simply stating that "pay talks at Southern have had a breakthrough, we expect to finalise a proposed settlement soon." No deal should be done for drivers at the expense of guards on Southern. Guards' union RMT has highlighted that Greater Anglia's insistence on strike breaking almost resulted in serious incidents. Southern has continued to try and intimidate guards who strike.

Both the RMT and Aslef should look to dig in for a long fight, and the labour movement should gather round to help.



Cleaners on London Underground, RMT activists and other supporters demonstrated at London City Hall on Thursday 12 October. They called for justice for cleaners — an end to outsourcing, £10 an hour wage, travel passes, sick pay, holiday, and pensions. More information on the campaign on www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

By a UCL student

Workers at University of London have been organising for better pay, an end to outsourcing, and respect at work through the IWGB union.

A majority of those involved in the campaign are security guards, but increasingly admins, post room workers, and porters are unionising and joining the dispute. How-

ever, the university has ignored their requests to negotiate new terms and pay.

Now a student and community supporter campaign is starting, Justice for UoL Workers, to help push forward the demands of these workers.

There will be an open meeting for this campaign on 25 October at 5pm, Nunn Hall in the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, WC1H 0AL.

Night tube to ballot

By Ollie Moore

Tube union RMT has declared a new dispute with London Underground involving its driver members, over issues relating to career progression.

Night Tube drivers say LU has

reneged on an agreement reached following a previous dispute and threat of strikes that was intended to guarantee drivers fair progression into full-time roles.

RMT is preparing to ballot its Night Tube driver members for strikes.



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CATALONIA: NO TO MADRID CLAMPDOWN!

By Tony Holmes

The Spanish government in Madrid says that it will suspend regional autonomy and impose direct rule on Catalonia from Thursday 19 October unless president Carles Puigdemont abandons his push for independence for the territory.

A Madrid clampdown would, soon if not immediately, lead to violent clashes such as happened when the Spanish government tried to stop Catalonia's 1 October referendum. The Catalan police might well side with the Catalan government against Spanish government forces.

On 10 October Catalan president Carles Puigdemont fell short of a full-scale declaration of independence, instead making a "symbolic" declaration to the Catalan parliament which he then immediately "suspended", calling for negotiations with the Spanish state and international mediation.

The Spanish government has tried to face down Puigdemont, demanding he confirm whether he's actually declared independence or not. Puigdemont has refused.

Spanish police have already arrested two pro-independence politicians on charges of sedition, Jordi Sànchez of the ANC (Catalan

National Assembly) and Jordi Cuixart of the Catalanist political and cultural institution Omnium.

The Puigdemont government had hoped that a referendum would force Spanish PM Mariano Rajoy into granting concessions on further autonomy. The conservative Spanish prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, with one eye on right-wing and anti-Catalan sentiment in his voter base, called Puigdemont's bluff and sent cops to try to repress the referendum with police methods.

AWKWARD
Both Puigdemont and Rajoy are caught in awkward positions.

Puigdemont is being pushed towards a declaration of independence which he probably wasn't planning on: on the latest polls this year, there is as yet no clear majority in Catalonia for independence.

The Spanish government is moving to more and more autocratic measures, feeding a crisis that is damaging Spain's diplomatic position and sending panic through the economy.

We are not for Catalan separation. We believe that whatever extra autonomy is necessary to satisfy Catalan rights can be won without setting up new border posts — not under the current Rajoy regime, but within a feasible



Catalan firefighters protect crowds from Spanish police at polling stations in the 1 October referendum

time.

Yet the issue can be settled democratically only by free de-

cisions, without coercion, of the Catalan people themselves. The priority now must be to demand

for an end to repression from Madrid and to oppose the revoking of regional autonomy or

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